



TOWN OF NEWTOWN

Proposed Bill No. 5733 An Act Concerning Access to a Child's Death Certificate

Good Morning Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson and to the rest of the distinguished members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Debbie Aurelia and I serve as the Town Clerk and Registrar of Vital Statistics for the Town of Newtown.

I am testifying today in support of the concept of House Bill 5733 but ask that it be amended in such a way to limit access to **all** death certificates, not just minors and to take a closer look at HB 6157 An Act Concerning Personally Identifying Information on Certifications of Marriage and Death.

From the horrific tragedy in Sandy Hook, awareness has come that we need to protect the personal information of all residents in the State of Connecticut. The media has repeatedly contacted my office requesting copies of all the death records. They want to know where the victims are buried and how they died. In the 8 years I have been in office I have seen only relatives, authorized agencies (social security admin) and attorneys requesting these documents and urge that we officially change the law to reflect the only apparent need for full access.

What the Town Clerk's Association wants to accomplish is to combine HB 5733 with HB 6157, and recommend this:

- Restrict access of the complete Death and Marriage Certificates to only immediate family/authorized agency/attorney
- Offer a certified registration of event to those who do not fall under the same or similar guidelines already established for issuing birth certificates

Death and Marriage certificates are official State documents and are only "Vital" to the parties named on them, used for Probate, funeral homes, apply for a name change on a driver's license, passports and social security cards, and health insurance enrollment. Providing entire certificates will open the door to identity theft, possible endangerment, threats and intimidation to the families.

I am a lifelong resident of Newtown, my family has been here for over 55 years, my son was married here and my granddaughter is being raised here. I'm a member of the Sandy Hook Ladies Auxiliary who aided the families of Sandy Hook Elementary School on December 14. My fiancé is the Chief of the Sandy Hook Volunteer Fire Department and his daughter is the EMS (Emergency Medical Services) Captain for SHVFD who both were among the first responders.

I am personally and professionally invested in my Town. And I believe the potential risks of disclosing these documents to the general public are far greater than any possible benefit.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I welcome any questions you have at this time.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie A Aurelia, CMC, CCTC